

The issues in Docket 02-277 were just recently brought to our attention. First, we would like to express our disappointment in the limited exposure of this issue to the general public. We are relatively savvy, politically involved people, who try to stay abreast of current issues. For this to have slipped under our radar brings us to one of the significant points in our opposition to additional deregulation of broadcast ownership. In the past twenty or so years, and especially since the Telecommunications Act of 1996, electronic and print media have become more and more consolidated, with major providers of news and entertainment being owned by fewer and fewer companies. Obviously, these companies are the potential beneficiaries of additional deregulation. Therefore, it behooves them to minimize their coverage of this issue.

We oppose additional deregulation because we do not believe it serves the best interest of the American public or of free enterprise - it serves large, moneyed corporations only. The public's ability to receive diverse, unbiased news from a variety of sources, and innovative entertainment, will be severely limited should media conglomerates be given additional leeway in their ability to control a greater number of outlets.

As a former radio broadcaster, I (Nikki) have observed the gradual change from markets full of local, independently owned stations to markets with more stations controlled by fewer owners. The end result? Sterile radio - all the country format stations sound the same, all the pop stations sound the same, all the rock stations sound the same; and especially disturbing: all the news stations sound the same. Deregulation will only create more of the same. Please, do not wholesale part of what makes our democratic system so wonderful - the freedom of discussion and dissent, of innovation and exploration. Please, do not further deregulate the ownership of broadcast media.

Nikki and Robert Baldwin